

Dungan language

The **Dungan language** (/ˈdʊŋɡɑːn/ or /ˈdʌŋɡən/) is a Sinitic language^[3] spoken primarily in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan by the Dungan people, an ethnic group related to the Hui people of China. Although it is derived from the Central Plains Mandarin of Gansu and Shaanxi, it is written in Cyrillic (or Xiao'erjing) and contains loanwords and archaisms not found in other modern varieties of Mandarin.

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Dungan	
Хуэйзүй йуян , <i>Huejzw jyjan</i> <div>回鹘حُوּت, 回族語言</div>	
Pronunciation	[xwɛi˧tʂu˧˥ jy˧˥ʈʂan˧˥]
Native to	Central Asia
Region	Fergana Valley, Chu Valley
Ethnicity	Dungan
Native speakers	110,000 (2009 censuses) ^[1]
Language family	<div>Sino-Tibetan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sinitic<ul style="list-style-type: none">Mandarin<ul style="list-style-type: none">Dungan</div>
Writing system	Cyrillic (official), Xiao'erjing (historical), Latin (historical), Pinyin
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	dng
Glottolog	dung1253 (http://glottolog.org/resource/lan guoid/id/dung1253) ^[2]

History

The Dungan people of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan (with smaller groups living in other post-Soviet states) are the descendants of several groups of the Hui people that migrated to the region in the 1870s and the 1880s after the defeat of the Dungan revolt in Northwestern China. The Hui of Northwestern China (often referred to as "Dungans" or "Tungani" by the 19th-century western writers as well as by members of Turkic nationalities in China and Central Asia) would normally speak the same Mandarin dialect as the Han people in the same area^[4] (or in the area from which the particular Hui community had been resettled). At the same time, due to their unique history, their speech would be rich in Islamic or Islam-influenced terminology, based on loanwords from Arabic, Persian and Turkic languages, as well as translations of them into Chinese.^[4] The Hui traders in the bazaars would be able to use Arabic or Persian numbers when talking between themselves, to keep their communications secret from Han bystanders.^[5] While not constituting a separate language, these words, phrases and turns of speech, known as *Huihui hua* (回回話, "Hui speech"), served as markers of group identity.^[4] As early 20th century travellers in Northwestern China would note, "the Mohammedan Chinese have to some extent a vocabulary and always a style and manner of speech, all their own".^[6]

As the Dungans in the Russian Empire, and even more so in the Soviet Union, were isolated from China, their language experienced significant influence from the Russian and the Turkic languages of their neighbors.

In the Soviet Union, a written standard of the Dungan language was developed, based on a dialect of the Gansu Province, rather than the Beijing base of Standard Chinese. The language was used in the schools in Dungan villages. In the Soviet time there were several school textbooks published for studying the Dungan language, a three volume Russian–Dungan dictionary (14,000 words), the Dungan–Russian dictionary, linguistics monographs on the language and books in Dungan. The first Dungan-language newspaper was established in 1932; it continues publication today in weekly form.

When Dru C. Gladney, who had spent some years working with the Hui people in China, met with Dungans in *Almaty* in 1988, he described the experience as speaking "in a hybrid Gansu dialect that combined Turkish and Russian lexical items".^[7]

Mutual intelligibility with Mandarin dialects

There is a varying degree of mutual intelligibility between Dungan and various Mandarin dialects. The Shaanxi and Gansu Mandarin dialects are understood by Dungans. On the other hand, Dungan speakers like Yasyr Shivaza and others have reported that Chinese who speak the Beijing Mandarin dialect can understand Dungan, but Dungans could not understand the Beijing Mandarin.^[8]

Demographics

Dungan is spoken primarily in Kyrgyzstan, with speakers in Russia, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan as well. The Dungan ethnic group are the descendants of refugees from China who migrated west into Central Asia.

Dungan language	
Chinese name	
Traditional Chinese	東干語
Simplified Chinese	东干语
Transcriptions	
Standard Mandarin	
Hanyu Pinyin	Dōnggān yǔ
Wade–Giles	Tung ¹ kan ¹ yü ³
IPA	[tʊŋ.kán̩.ɿ]
other Mandarin	
Xiao'erjing	دوڭغار دۆڭغار
Dunganese name	
Dungan	Хузэйзү йҕяһ
Xiao'erjing	خُوْطْ يُوْيا
Romanization	Huejzw jyian Hueyzǔ yǔyan
Hanzi	回族語言 (<i>Huízú yǔyán</i>)
Russian name	
Russian	Дунганский язык
Romanization	<i>Dunganskij</i> <i>jazyk</i>
Kyrgyz name	
Kyrgyz	Дунган тили دُونْغَان تیلی <i>Dunġan tili</i>

According to the Soviet census statistics from 1970 to 1989, the Dungan maintained the use of their ethnic language much more successfully than other minority ethnic groups in Central Asia; however, in the post-Soviet period, the proportion of Dungans speaking the Dungan language as their native language appears to have fallen sharply.

Dungan speakers by population				
Year	Dungan L1	Russian L2	Total Dungan population	Source
1970	36,445 (94.3%)	18,566 (48.0%)	38,644	Soviet census (https://web.archive.org/web/20060903124153/http://www.hum.uit.no/a/tro nd/s70.html)
1979	49,020 (94.8%)	32,429 (62.7%)	51,694	Soviet census (https://web.archive.org/web/20060903124204/http://www.hum.uit.no/a/tro nd/s79.html)
1989	65,698 (94.8%)	49,075 (70.8%)	69,323	Soviet census (https://web.archive.org/web/20060903124216/http://www.hum.uit.no/a/tro nd/s89.html)
2001	41,400 (41.4%)	N/A	100,000	Ethnologue (http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=dng)

Grammar

Classifiers

Chinese varieties usually have different classifiers for different types of nouns, with northern varieties tending to have fewer classifiers than southern ones. 个 ([kə]) is the only classifier found in the Dungan language, though not the only measure word.^[9]

Phonology

In basic structure and vocabulary, the Dungan language is not very different from Mandarin Chinese, specifically a variety of Zhongyuan Mandarin (not Lan-Yin Mandarin) spoken in the southern part of the province of Gansu and the western part of the valley of Guanzhong in the province of Shaanxi. Like other Chinese varieties, Dungan is tonal. There are two main dialects, one with 4 tones and the other, considered standard, with 3 tones in the final position in phonetic words and 4 tones in the nonfinal position.

Consonants

The corresponding table compares current Dungan spelling, old Dungan spelling, pinyin and IPA.

Consonant table															
Unaspirated				Aspirated				Nasal				Fricative			
Cyrillic	Latin	Pinyin	IPA	Cyrillic	Latin	Pinyin	IPA	Cyrillic	Latin	Pinyin	IPA	Cyrillic	Latin	Pinyin	IPA
б	b	b	p	п	p	p	p ^h	м	m	m	m	ф	f	f	f
д	d	d	t̪	т	t	t	t ^h	н	n	n	n				
з	z	z	t͡s	ц	c	c	ts ^h					с	s	s	s
ж	z̞	zh	t͡ʃ	ч	ç	ch	t͡ʃ ^h					ш	ʃ	sh	ʃ
		j	t͡ɕ			q	t͡ɕ ^h					ц		x	ɕ
г	g	g	k	к	k	k	k ^h	ң	ŋ	ng	ŋ	х	x	h	x̟

Vowels

Using Standard Chinese vowels as basis, each vowel and its respective current Dungan spelling is presented below, along with the old Dungan spelling, using pinyin and IPA.

Note that the correspondence between Dungan vowels and Standard Chinese vowels is not perfect.

Vowel table

Cyrillic	Latin	Pinyin	IPA		Cyrillic	Latin	Pinyin	IPA		Cyrillic	Latin	Pinyin	IPA		Cyrillic	Latin	F
ы	ь	i	ɨː		и	i	i	iː		ў	w	u	uː		ү	y	ü
а	a	a	aː		я	ja	ia (ya)	ia (jaː)		уа	ua	ua	ua				
ә	ə	e	ɤː		е	je	ie (ye)	ie (jeː)		уә	uə	uo	uɤ		үә	yə	ü
э	e	ê, ai	ɛː							уэ	ue	ue, uai	uɛ				
о	o	o, ao	ɔː		ё	jo	iao (yao)	ioː (joː)		уэй	wj	ui	uei				
ый	ьj	ei	ɨi							уй	vi	wei	uei				
у	u	ou	ʊ		ю	ju, jy	iu (you)	iou (jou)									
ан	an	an	ǣ~æ̃n		ян	jan	ian (yan)	iǣ~iæ̃n (jǣ~jæ̃n)		уан	uan	uan	uǣ~uæ̃n		үан	yan	ü u
он	on	ang	õ~ɔ̃n		ён	jon	iang (yang)	iõ~iõn (jõ~jõn)		уон	uon	uang	uɔ̃n				
ын	ьn	eng, en	ẽ~ə̃n		ин	in	ing, in	ĩ~in		ун	wn	ong	un		үн	yn	ic u
эр	əɽ	er	əɽ														

Vowel constructs that can be used as independent syllable without consonants are shown in parenthesis. There are rhotacised vowels, as well as some syllables only seen in loan words from Russian, Arabic, Kyrgyz, etc., in addition to the above table.

Tones

Tones in Dungan are marked with nothing (tone 1), a soft sign (tone 3) and a hard sign (tone 2).^[10]

Tonal comparison between Dungan and Mandarin

Standard Chinese tone number	Dungan tone number	Tone name	Dungan example	Chinese character	Gansu-Dungan		Shaanxi-Dungan		Standard Chinese		References
					Pitch pattern	Tone contour	Pitch pattern	Tone contour	Pitch pattern	Tone contour	
1	1	陰平 (yīnpíng)	xya	花	Rising	˩ (24)	Falling	˩ (51)	High	˩ (55)	Standard Gansu-Dungan doesn't distinguish tone 1 and tone 2 only in the final position of phonetic words.
2		陽平 (yángpíng)	xya	華			Rising	˩ (24)	Rising	˩ (35)	
3	2	上聲 (shǎngshēng)	bə	我	Falling	˩ (51)	Falling	˩ (53)	Low/dipping	˩, ˩ (1, 214)	
4	3	去聲 (qùshēng)	ɥǐ	去	High	˩ (44)	High	˩ (44)	Falling	˩ (52)	Some syllables originating in tone 4 fall into tone 1 in modern Mandarin.
0	0	輕聲	ʒbi	子	Short	Varies	Short	Varies	Short	Varies	Actual pitch depends on the preceding syllable.

Vocabulary

The basilects of Gansu/Shaanxi Mandarin and Dungan are largely mutually intelligible; Chinese journalists conversant in one of those Mandarin dialects report that they can make themselves understood when communicating with Dungan speakers. However, even at the level of basic vocabulary, Dungan contains many words not present in modern Mandarin dialects, such as Arabic and Persian loanwords, as well as archaic Qing dynasty-era Chinese vocabulary.^[11] Furthermore, the acrolects of Dungan and Gansu/Shaanxi Mandarin have diverged significantly due to time and cultural influences. During the 20th century, translators and intellectuals introduced many neologisms and calques into the Chinese language, especially for political and technical concepts. However, the Dungan, cut off from the mainstream of Chinese discourse by orthographic barriers, instead borrowed words for those same concepts from Russian, with which they came into contact through government and higher education. As a result of these borrowings, the equivalent standard Chinese terms are not widely known or understood among the Dungan.^[12]

Writing system

The modern Dungan language is the only spoken Chinese that is written in the Cyrillic alphabet, as they lived under Soviet rule. It is a Russian-based alphabet plus five special letters: Җ, Һ, Ү, Ө and Ұ. As such, it differs somewhat from the Palladius System that is normally used in Russia to write Chinese in Cyrillic.

The modern Dungan alphabet, with IPA and Latin transcriptions

Cyrillic	А/а	Б/б	В/в	Г/г	Д/д	Е/е	Ё/ё	Ж/ж	Ж/ж	З/з	И/и	Й/й	К/к	Л/л
Name	а	бэ	вэ	гэ	дэ	е	ё	жэ	же	зэ	и	ий	ка	эль
IPA	a, ɑ	p	w	k	t	iɛ	iɔ	ʒ	tʃ, tɕ	ts	i, ei	j	kʰ	l
Latin	a	b	v	g	d	(y)e	yo	zh, rzh	zh	z	i	(y)u, (y)i	k	l
Cyrillic	М/м	Н/н	Н/н	Ә/ә	О/о	П/п	Р/р	С/с	Т/т	У/у	Ў/ў	Ү/ү	Ф/ф	Х/х
Name	эм	эн	ың	ә	о	пэ	эр	эс	тэ	у	ў	ү	эф	ха
IPA	m	n	ŋ	ʏ	ɔ	pʰ	ə, r	s	tʰ	ʊ, u	u	y	f	x
Latin	m	n	ng	eh	o	p	r	s	t	u	wu	(y)u	f	kh
Cyrillic	Ц/ц	Ч/ч	Ш/ш	Щ/щ	Ъ/ъ	Ы/ы	Ь/ь	Э/э	Ю/ю	Я/я				
Name	цэ	чэ	ша	ща	нин хо	ы	ван хо	э	ю	яа				
IPA	tsʰ	tʃʰ, tɕʰ	ʃ	ɕ	*	ɪ, ɛ	*	ɛ	ɪʊ	ia, ia				
Latin	ts	ch	sh	shch, hs	ʰ	ɪ	ʲ	e(i)	yu	ya				

Note

- The letters **Ъ** and **Ь** are only used to write Russian loanwords and tone markings on children's primers dictionaries^[10]

Dungan is unique in that it is one of the few varieties of Chinese that is not normally written using Chinese characters. Originally, the Dungan, who were Muslim descendants of the Hui, wrote their language in an Arabic-based alphabet known as *Xiao'erjing*. The Soviet Union banned all Arabic scripts in the late 1920s, which led to a Latin orthography based on Janalif. The Latin orthography lasted until 1940, when the Soviet government promulgated the current Cyrillic-based system. Xiao'erjing is now virtually extinct in Dungan society, but it remains in limited use by some Hui communities in China.

The writing system is based on the standard 3-tone dialect. Tone marks or numbering do not appear in general-purpose writing, but are specified in dictionaries, even for loanwords. The tones are specified using the soft sign, hard sign, or nothing.

Consonant chart:

Pinyin	Palladiy	Dungan	Pinyin	Palladiy	Dungan	Pinyin	Palladiy	Dungan	Pinyin	Palladiy	Dungan
b	б	б	p	п	п	m	м	м	f	ф	ф
d	д	д	t	т	т	n	н	н / л	l	л	л
z	цз	з	c	ц	ц	s	с	с			
j	цз(ь)	ж(ь)	q	ц(ь)	ч(ь)	x	с(ь)	щ(ь)			
zh	чж	ж	ch	ч	ч	sh	ш	ш / с / ф	r	ж	ж
g	г	г	k	к	к				h	х	х

Literature

A number of books in Dungan language, including textbooks, Dungan-Russian and Russian-Dungan dictionaries, a Dungan etymological dictionary, collections of folk tales, original and translated fiction and poetry have been published in Kyrgyzstan. Usual print runs were no more than a few hundred copies. A newspaper in Dungan has been published as well.

Works of the Dungan poet Yasir Shiwaza have been translated into Russian, Standard Chinese and a number of other languages, with print runs in some of them been much higher than in the original Dungan. English translations of some of them, along with the original Dungan text, are available in the book by S. Rimsky-Korsakoff (1991).

See also

- Cyrillization of Chinese

Notes

- Dungan (<https://www.ethnologue.com/18/language/dng/>) at *Ethnologue* (18th ed., 2015)
- Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Dungan" (<http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/dung1253>). *Glottolog 3.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
- Different from **Mandarin** in phonology and lexicon. [**1**] (<http://www.ethnologue.com/language/dng>)
- Dru C. Gladney, *Muslim Chinese: Ethnic Nationalism in the People's Republic*. 1st ed.: Harvard University Press, 1991, ISBN 0-674-59495-9; 2nd ed., 1996. ISBN 0-674-59497-5. Pages 393-394 in the 1991 edition. The following pages in this book, 321–395, are occupied by "A Select Glossary of Hui Chinese Islamic Terms", into which Gladney included only words (many found in older publications) that he could verify as known or recognized by people in at least some Hui communities he visited.
- Gladney (1991), p. 68
- Owen Lattimore, *The Desert Road to Turkestan*. London, Methuen & Co, ca. 1928–1929. Page 196.
- Gladney, pp 33, 102



Books in Dungan or about Dungan (in Russian or English). Most of them were published in Frunze, Kirghiz SSR in the 1970s and 80s



Bilingual sign in Russian and Dungan at the home of Soviet war hero Mansuzy Vanakhun

8. Rimsky-Korsakoff Dyer, Svetlana (1977). "Soviet Dungan nationalism: a few comments on their origin and language". *Monumenta Serica*. **33**: 349–362. doi:10.1080/02549948.1977.11745054 (<https://doi.org/10.1080%2F02549948.1977.11745054>). p. 351.
9. Yue, Anne O. (2003). "Chinese dialects: grammar" (<https://books.google.de/books?id=YlyuDQAAQBAJ&pg=PT175&dq=dunganese&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwj5wqbN8MHRaHUK3SwKHe4pDuM4ChDoAQgpMAM#v=onepage&q=dunganese&f=false>). In Thurgood, Graham; LaPolla, Randy J. (eds.). *The Sino-Tibetan languages*. Routledge. pp. 84–125. ISBN 978-0-7007-1129-1.
10. "Dungan language, alphabet and pronunciation" (<https://www.omniglot.com/chinese/dungan.htm>). *www.omniglot.com*. Retrieved 2019-11-18.
11. "The "Shaanxi Village" in Kazakhstan" (<https://web.archive.org/web/20060424085207/http://en.chinabroadcast.cn/1857/2004-7-9/53@130293.htm>). China Radio International - CRIENGLISH.com. 2004-07-09. Archived from the original (<http://en.chinabroadcast.cn/1857/2004-7-9/53@130293.htm>) on 2006-04-24.
12. Mair, Victor (May 1990). "Implications of the Soviet Dungan Script for Chinese Language Reform" (<http://www.pinyin.info/readings/texts/dungan.html>). *Sino-Platonic Papers* (18).

General references

- Rimsky-Korsakoff, Svetlana (1967). "Soviet Dungan: The Chinese language of Central Asia: alphabet, phonology, morphology". *Monumenta Serica*. **26**: 352–421. doi:10.1080/02549948.1967.11744973 (<https://doi.org/10.1080%2F02549948.1967.11744973>). JSTOR 40725857 (<https://www.jstor.org/stable/40725857>).
- Svetlana Rimsky-Korsakoff Dyer, *Iasyr Shivaza: The Life and Works of a Soviet Dungan Poet*. 1991. ISBN 3-631-43963-6. (Contains a detailed bibliography and ample samples of Shivaza works', some in the original Cyrillic Dungan, although most in a specialized transcription, with English and sometimes standard Chinese translations).
- Olga I. Zavjalova. "Some Phonological Aspects of the Dungan Dialects." Computational Analyses of Asian and African Languages. Tokyo, 1978. No. 9. Pp. 1–24. (Contains an experimental analysis of Dungan tones).
- Olga Zavjalova. "Dungan Language." Encyclopedia of Chinese Language and Linguistics. General Editor Rint Sybesma. Vol. 2. Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2017. Pp. 141–148.
- 海峰. 中亚东干语言研究 (Hai Feng. *Zhongya Donggan yuyan yanjiu—A Study of the Dungan Language of Central Asia*.) Urumchi, 2003. 479 p. ISBN 7-5631-1789-X. (Description of the Dungan language by a professor of Xinjiang University).
- Salmi, Olli (2018). *Dungan–English Dictionary*. Manchester, UK: Eastbridge Books. ISBN 978-1-78869-154-3.

External links

- "Implications of the Soviet Dungan Script for Chinese Language Reform" (<http://www.pinyin.info/readings/texts/dungan.html>): long essay on Dungan, with sample texts
- Dungan writing system in Omniglot (<https://web.archive.org/web/20060425081258/http://www.omniglot.com/writing/dungan.htm>)
- The Shaanxi Village in Kazakhstan (<https://web.archive.org/web/20060424085207/http://en.chinabroadcast.cn/1857/2004-7-9/53@130293.htm>)
- Soviet census data for mother tongue and second language, in English (<https://web.archive.org/web/20081020191853/http://www.hum.uit.no/a/t rond/sintr.html>)
- Central Asian Dungan as a Chinese Dialect (<http://www.tsalo.fi/dungan/Dungan%20as%20Chinese%20Dialect.html>)

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